

In one of their poorest displays of the season, Wanderers gave a lifeless performance that brought an end to their unbeaten

Those 3-0 and 4-0 home victories over Sutton and Ilford last week pushed Wycombe into second place and started everyone wondering about the title. Although they stay second after Dagenham's home draw with Woking, the Blues must know full well that they have no chance of the championship if they continue to produce this type of football.

By STUART EARP Croydon 1, Wycombe Wanderers 0

I can't imagine Croydon enjoy playing at the Arena every week. A running track surrounds the pitch which robs any atmosphere as the

The pitch itself left a lot to be desired and the poor surface made it difficult for the players to show any degree of control.

All these factors must be taken

Croydon knew only too well the penalty of allowing their opponents time and space in which to play—they had been well beaten 3-0 earlier in the season at Loakes Park. It was their intention to deny Wanderers those commodities on Saturday and they succeeded. Chasing hard, they never allowed Wycombe to settle and forced numerous errors from the visitors.

Priestley not far behind. Steve Hill replaced Dylan Evans from the side that beat Ilford in mid-week and Wycombe were soon under pressure. Goalkeeper John Maskell looked far from safe with a couple of early corners while at the other end, Croydon's offside trap often caught out the Blues from free kicks.

Conditions, including an awkward wind, meant a frustrating 45 minutes for the fans with neither side ever getting the ball under control with any consistency. There were only two half chances before the break, Maskell saving well from Brian Wooley and Mick Hollifield being tackled just as he was about to shoot. Apart from that, there were few dangerous moments in the penalty areas.

The second half brought a little more excitement but the standard of play was again poor overall. Croydon were ahead after only four minutes of the new period with a beautifully taken goal by Cliff Gould.

A long ball upfield saw Gould and Keith Mead give chase and Gould used his extra speed to outrun the Wycombe centre-back. Maskell came out half way but Gould's lob was perfectly placed and bounced into the net.

SECOND

Wanderers gave glimpses of their attacking flair but they were never able to put continuous pressure on the Crofton defence in which Adrian Hill was outstanding. Too often the Blues found themselves second to the ball, lacking the fight and aggression of the home side.

Howard Kettleborough saw a header well saved by Dave Cobb and the same player nodded over the top from Bob Davies's long cross. In the 61st minute Graham Mackenzie fired in a 25-yard drive that sent Cobb diving full-length to save.

Hill a minute later and it was Dylan who had a great chance to equalise when Birdseye caught

Croydon napping with a quick free-kick. His perfectly flighted pass flew over the defence to Evans but he shot wide as Cobb raced out of his goal.

Wycombe continued to carve out the better chances and Alan Phillips will be kicking himself for missing an open goal in the 75th minute. Ian Pearson's corner beat Cobb and fell nicely to Phillips but he headed over the top from close range.

There was only one more opportunity for the Blues to take a share of the points but that, too, was spurned in the 80th minute. Holfield found Davies on the left and his long cross fell perfectly to the oncoming Kettleborough. But with just Cobb to beat, the big centre-forward headed wide of the upright.

WYCOMBE: J. Maskell; P. Birdseye, K. Mead, A. Phillips, H. Davies; S. Mackenzie, J. Priestley, M. Holfield; S. Hill (sub), D. Evans (2 mfn), H. Kettleborough, I. Pearson.

CROYDON: D. Cobb; K. Roots; A. Hill; R. Gonzalez; K. Gross; A. Prime; F. Sterling; B. Woolley; M. O'Toole; C. Gould; C. Hall; Sub S. Delaney (not used).
Referee: E. Carter.

Half-time: 0-0 Goalscorer: Gould (49).